

In Memoriam: Dwight L. Bolinger 1907-1992

By Arthur J. Bronstein

Dwight Bolinger, longtime member of ADS, prolific contributor to the study of linguistics and of the Spanish and English languages, died in Palo Alto on February 23. His passing leaves a space that will not easily be filled, as all of us in this society know.

Bolinger's publishing and professional career was remarkable. He made a real impact on the discipline of linguistics and strongly influenced many of its practitioners. He authored or edited 15 books and approximately 300 essays in published journals and collections.

One cannot even think of such subjects as intonation, pitch accent, phrasal verbs, the double vowel triangle of American English, truth in linguistics, contrastive stress, linear modification, Modern Spanish, melodic levels and configurations, idiomaticity—and so much more—without referring to his contributions.

Bolinger fell into no special group or school of linguistics. He could, and did, take issue with adherents of structuralism as easily as he did with transformationalists. His interests lay in the observation, recording, and analysis of data: what people said, meant, pronounced, used; how they extended the lexicon; why certain expressions could be analyzed as grammatical, or not; how we use language on the street, over the radio or TV; why we mean what we say, and so much more.

Like the composer of music that he thought he might become (when still an undergraduate), he stated that he "tried to test the limits of language with a kaleidoscope of examples." (Cf. his autobiographical essay in *First Person Singular II*, ed. Konrad Koerner, Benjamins 1991.)

KANSAS CITY, HARVARD, PALO ALTO

Bolinger's professional career started in 1937 at Kansas City (Missouri) Junior College; he moved to Washburn College for six years, then to the University of Southern California in 1944 for 13 years (where he chaired the Department of Spanish), to the University of Colorado in 1960, and then to Harvard (1963 to 1972). He became emeritus in 1973, "retiring" to Palo Alto, where he joined Stanford University as a visiting scholar in linguistics.

He was a Sterling Fellow at Yale in 1943, a Research Fellow at the Haskins Laboratories in 1951, and at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford in 1969.

He served as president of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (1960), of the Linguistic Society of America (1972), and of the Linguistic Association of Canada and the United States (1975-76).

His published essays appeared in *Language*, *PMLA*, *American Speech*, *PADS*, *Word*, *Journal of Linguistics*, *Journal of Broadcasting, Language and Communication*, *Journal of English Linguistics*, *American Scholar*, *Modern Language Journal*, *International Journal of Lexicography*, and many others. He started "Among the New Words" for *American Speech*—the enterprise that traces itself to the current keepers of neologisms for that journal, John and Adele Algeo.

THE COMPLETE CORRESPONDENT

Bolinger seems to have corresponded with every major linguist in the country. His files of letters, so carefully arranged in his study at his home in Palo Alto, began with letters to and from H.L. Mencken in 1936. His correspondence didn't come to a halt until his recent illness began to force a slowing down.

I still react with wonder that anyone could have written and received thousands of letters to and from so many major linguists, on matters of scholarly import about everything that Bolinger had an interest in. He could, and did, refer to those letters and files with the ease of removing a volume from the large collection of linguistic materials that surrounded him.

His *First Person* essay provides a chance to note his remarks about so many linguists of the century, with pert comments such as "no-nonsense R. Stockwell"; Y. Malkiel "with more mileage as a writer of linguistics than anyone else"; R. Jakobson "whose conversation and wit never dulled even by the Russian syntax and phonology that it had to filter through"; N. Chomsky, "the most skilled advocate in our field who would write an equation any day rather than a paragraph," and more.

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The obituary notice in the New York Times called him "a keen observer of the language in everyday use," which he certainly was. Every movie, radio program, TV program or group conversation was a mine for his semantic syntactic, lexical, phonetic exploration. Teacher, professor, administrator, animated conversationalist, prolific correspondent, acute observer of language use, author, brilliant linguist, good friend and colleague—Dwight was all of these at a very high level of performance. He'd be pleased to know that his influence, through his books, essays, and letters in our files, will keep his thoughts and his memory alive for a long time to come.

(For information on the Bolinger papers at Stanford, write Margaret Kimball, Archivist, Special Collections, Stanford University Library, Stanford CA 94305-6004.)

OTHER DEATHS

We are sorry to have to report the recent deaths of three other ADS members:

Daniel N. Cardenas, emeritus of California State University, Long Beach.

S. I. Hayakawa, emeritus of San Francisco State University and former U.S. Senator; also an ADS life member.

Stanley M. Tsuzaki, emeritus of the University of Hawaii.

'Tongues' to Wag Again

"American Tongues," Louis Alvarez and Andrew Kolker's perspicuous 1986 exploration of regional and social dialects, takes to the tube again on the PBS program "P.O.V." during the week of August 17. Check with your local station for broadcast time.

"American Tongues" is a sheer delight as well as an education—a 56-minute whirlwind tour of our language. It was vetted for accuracy by Frederic Cassidy, Raven McDavid and Walt Wolfram.

As lagniappe, "P.O.V." will premiere Alvarez and Kolker's "Louisiana Boys" in the week of August 31. This is about politics rather than language.

For further information, write Center for New American Media, 524 Broadway 2nd Floor, New York NY 10012; phone (212) 925-5665.

LAVIS II: Call for Papers

Proposals are now invited for presentations at the conference on Language Variety in the South to be held at Auburn University April 1-4, 1993.

LAVIS II is its acronym, and it promises indeed to be lavish, too, with addresses by distinguished scholars from North America and Europe as well as "lots of food and fun," in the words of the organizing committee.

November 15 is the deadline for abstracts of 20-minute papers treating any aspect of Southern American English: lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic, or discourse features; regional or social varieties and their origins; effects of language contact; methods of data collection and analysis.

Address abstracts or inquiries to **Cynthia Bernstein, Thomas Nunnally, or Robin Sabino**, LAVIS II Committee, Dept. of English, Auburn University, Auburn University [sic] AL 36849-5203; phone (205) 844-4620; fax (205) 844-2378.

The conference will be held in conjunction with the spring meeting of the Southeast Conference on Linguistics. SECOL abstracts not directly concerned with Southern American English should be sent to Greta Little and Michael Montgomery, Linguistics Program, University of South Carolina, Columbia SC 29208.

Like the original LAVIS, held in 1981 at the University of South Carolina, LAVIS II is expected to result in a published volume of essays.

Nominations Still Welcome

In September the Nominating Committee will propose candidates for Vice President 1993-94, Executive Council member 1993-96, and Nominating Committee member 1993-94. Before then your suggestions are still welcome. Write to Nominating Committee Chair **Richard W. Bailey**, Dept. of English Language and Literature, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI 48109. Other committee members are **Thomas J. Creswell** and **Amy Devitt**.

In the fall President **Michael Linn** will name three students as Presidential Honorary Members. Your nominations are still welcome; write him at English Dept., 420 Humanities Bldg., Univ. of Minnesota, Duluth MN 55812.